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Abominations

authenticity is why you're doing it: An Interview with Zachary Sullivan Carson of Snatch the Snail

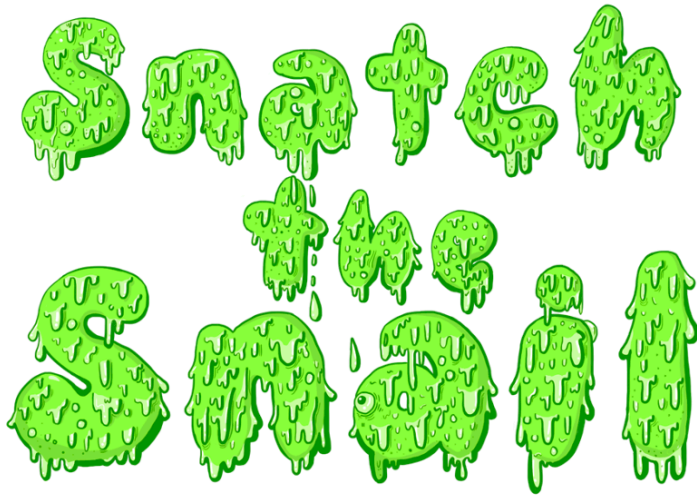
October 9, 2023August 29, 2023

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8 COMMENTS

I discovered Snatch the Snail a little earlier this year while I was perusing the offerings at GetMusic.fm. The brainchild of Zachary Sullivan Carson, Snatch the Snail offers catchy indie tunes with a humorous flair in a style reminiscent of Cake, Weezer, Beat Happening, and Daniel Johnston. Not content with recording and promoting his own music, Carson also runs the indie label Slimelight Records with Matthew David Garth. To find out more, I reached out to Carson with a few questions.

You've really gone all-in with Snatch the Snail! It's not just a cool band name. The snail theme runs through all of your albums. Can you talk a little bit about your interest in snails and how that crossed over into your musical endeavors?



(<https://marcschuster.files.wordpress.com/2023/08/screenshot-2023-08-29-at-3.00.07-pm.png>)

When the band first started in 2012, it consisted of me and my childhood best friend, Daniel McWhorter. He played synthesizer and did some vocals on the first album, Wuce Brayne. He and I would sit and consider band names for a long time. He was the one who thought of the band name after a few other options that had to do with snails. He said “Snatch the Snail” and we both looked at each other like that’s it. We would talk a lot about different things Snatch the Snail could mean. It really snatched our snail. But ultimately to me, it was a great metaphor for this musical project being a way to come out of my shell a bit. It’s an outlet to get out all those thoughts and feelings that stick with me until they come to a boil.

After Snatch the Snail was a final decision, I would research snails and try to use some snail terminology or symbolism in the lyrics. Sometimes it works really well for a song. It also has helped me in life in weird ways. Things like slowing down and patience can make a big difference. I got some pet snails for a while just to be more in touch, but they were pretty difficult to keep alive. Anyways, on every album I like to have a picture of a snail on the cover, and a couple of snail related songs.

Your music has a humorous edge. Why is humor important to you, and how does it factor into your approach to both music and life in general?

There’s a couple of reasons for that. First of all, I’ve always been into comedy. I loved funny movies, my friends and I would film skits as kids. I’m also into a lot of bands that can be really funny. A few being Green Day, Weezer and Tera Melos. The other reason is simply the fact that Snatch the Snail is an outlet and comedy is something I often consume. I listen to a lot of comedians and I even do standup comedy every once in a while. It’s basically my second passion aside from music. Essentially, a song is kind of dull to me without a couple of witty remarks.

I mentioned a few artists that your music reminds me of in the introduction above—Cake, Weezer, Beat Happening, and Daniel Johnston. I'm curious, though, about your influences. Who do you listen to, and how does their music influence your own?

I love all the artists you mentioned except I never heard of Beat Happening. I'll have to check it out. I definitely listen to a lot of Weezer if that's not totally obvious. Cake comes into rotation here and there. I listen to a lot of Pavement and Green Day. The band I mentioned earlier, Tera Melos, is one I've been obsessed with since like 2007. The Beatles are a constant. Besides that, I like a lot of hits from the 20th century. And as I've been getting older, I've been listening to more jazz.

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To be more technical, there's a certain musical scale that really gets me going for Snatch the Snail. I try to include it in every single song. Some other artists I hear it a lot from are Pavement, MacDemarco, Weezer (specifically The Sweater Song) and Tera Melos/guitarist Nick Reinhart.

And you've been recording as Snatch the Snail for quite a while—since 2012, if I'm reading your Bandcamp page correctly! How do you keep your momentum going?

Yeah that's correct. The first album took about a year and a half to make. Came out in 2012. How do I keep it going? I don't know! Since the start, I've been excited to write more Snatch the Snail songs. Every time I have an idea, it's like a drug. I'm just so ready to get it recorded. And so many things inspire me. Like other music, movies, day to day life, things people say. It's kind of infinite as long as I'm alive. I should also note that I'm not constricted by a big label or any entity. It's just me at my house whenever I feel like recording. It only gets hard when I feel like I'm repeating myself.

Your LinkTree page includes a link to Sully Van Left-Handed Guitars. Do you make guitars? If so, what led you to that pursuit?



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SULLY VANNNNN. I don't make them from scratch. I'll buy those guitar kits where they send you the wood and all the parts. I just paint them cool colors and sell them for relatively cheap. That's something I started because as a lefty guitar player, the options are slim. They're either way over priced or they're kinda basic. Sully Vann Guitars is all about decently priced guitars with cool colors. I only got 1 right now. It's something I only do when I have a lot of free time.

You also play in a few different bands. How is the music you make with Dividedividedive, for example, different from your Snatch the Snail material?

Ah yes. To clarify, dividedividedive and a band called She Looks like a Horse were my bands from high school. All of those bands' music was recorded around 2009-2011. They fizzled out after high school, and that's when I started Snatch the Snail. They're much different because I do all the writing in Snatch the Snail and try to be more eccentric/out of the box. The high school bands were more like me and some friends choosing a genre and running with it.

I've been pretty loyal to Snail, but I do have one other current project called David Christ & The Apocalypse. When I was doing comedy, I met Matthew David Garth who's stage name is David Christ. He wanted to start a band that was kind of like Marilyn Manson but funnier. So I do a lot of David's instrumentals for the band, but it's his baby.

You've been running Slimelight records since 2022. How did that come about?



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Yeah so Matt Garth (David Christ) and I are both creative machines. We're constantly writing and sending each other new songs. We wanted an umbrella company where you can find all of our content, so we made Slimelight Records. It includes everything he and I have done. Plus my girlfriend has a project called Snotbody. She's on the roster. We are still looking for more artists to work with, so hit us up if you wanna be part of it!!

Slimelight's "About" page makes a distinction between seeking out talent and nurturing it. Why is that an important distinction, and how do you nurture the artists you work with?

Well, nurturing each other's talent is something we (me, David Christ, and Snotbody) do as friends all the time. Everyone needs a third party opinion on their creative efforts. It's a safe space for artistic ideas to be expressed and realized without any judgment or naysaying. We might disagree with some choices but ultimately we bounce ideas off each other until the right one is born. So when we offer this to other artists who want to be involved with Slimelight, that's all we mean. You wouldn't be alone in your creative process unless you really wanted to be. The idea is to grow as an artist and gain more tricks up your sleeve.

I'm also struck by Slimelight's dedication to "authenticity and artistry." How would you define those two traits and why do they matter?

Authenticity refers to your voice. Like, how do you really feel? And does your creative content reflect that accurately? I feel like it's easy to get trapped in the thought of writing based on what others might think about it. That being said, the artistry part can help make your authenticity more accessible to your audience. You can be authentic all day, but it takes some artistic finesse to turn that authenticity into a product. Basically, authenticity is why you're doing it, and artistry is how you do it. That's how I look at it anyway.

And, to tie everything back to Snatch the Snail, how do all of your musical endeavors influence your personal musical output?

That's an interesting question. Had to think about that for a minute. The simplest answer is the expansion of my palette / taste. Also the addition of nicer gear / equipment. When you do all these things we talked about like nurturing talent, and striving for authenticity, you might start to appreciate other genres or different forms of art. That's been the case for me, so my influences will change. Or I'll realize that what I'm striving for is a particular recording quality, so I'll buy different gear to achieve that.

Any additional projects on the horizon?

As far as Snatch the Snail, I've got some songs in the works that veer more towards Electronic music. Not saying that's gonna be my style forever, but I felt like going that route this year. As for David Christ & The Apocalypse, I want to get a little more metal.. but still funny.



(<https://marcschuster.files.wordpress.com/2023/08/screenshot-2023-08-29-at-3.43.27-pm.png>)

For Slimelight Records, I'm saving up to get some cassette tapes made for all the music. Definitely need more physical copies of everything. There's also a super secret project going on called THE TIZZ. I have no idea what that's gonna sound like though. It's another brain child of Matthew David Garth that I'm gonna help out with.

Thanks for taking the time to talk to me!

Yes, of course. Thanks for the questions! I love any platform where people promote bands that are on the more obscure/unheard of side. Your questions were also great.

8 thoughts on “authenticity is why you’re doing it: An Interview with Zachary Sullivan Carson of Snatch the Snail”

So cool that you wrote about this band! This was a Getmusic.fm find for me too initially with “Earth to Snail”

Audio Mirage Studios , October 9, 2023 at 9:26 am

He’s an incredibly interesting artist!

Marc Schuster , October 9, 2023 at 9:29 am

Snatch the Snail really is a brilliant name and these guys deserve to be more in the limelight!

Joking aside, based on sampling some of the songs on their most recent album “Earth to Snail,” they are an intriguing act!

christiansmusicmusings , October 9, 2023 at 4:09 pm

Definitely intriguing!

Marc Schuster , October 9, 2023 at 4:10 pm

Great interview! I listened to “Earth to Snail”, and I hear a strong Weezer influence. In fact, Zachary’s vocals sound a lot like Rivers Cuomo on some tracks. One of my favorites on the album is “Scared of Having Kids”, something I identify with as I never wanted them.

EclecticMusicLover , October 9, 2023 at 7:03 pm

I agree on ALL counts... Especially that last one!

Marc Schuster , October 9, 2023 at 7:04 pm

Just listened to their first album “Wuce Brayne” (what a great title!) and it’s both trippy & brilliant. Zachary writes such witty and thoughtful lyrics, and the musical styles are wild and all over the map. Good stuff! As Christian so eloquently stated, Snatch the Snail deserve to be more in the limelight.

EclecticMusicLover , October 9, 2023 at 7:45 pm

Absolutely!

Marc Schuster , October 9, 2023 at 9:16 pm

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